The Cerrillos Rustler.

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MR. THRIFTSPENDER.

The Secret That Costs Him £500 a Year.

Robert Thriftspender sat one morning luxuriously toasting his slippered feet before his dressing-room fire. The Times, nicely aired, had just been placed at his elbow and a brandy-and-soda fizzed temptingly beside it. Mr. Thriftspender lay back, with his fingers intertwined over that part of him where his digestive apparatus ought to have been, and twiddled his thumbs with as contented an air as was compatible with a slight chronic dyspepsia. He was indulging in a little retrospect. How fortunately everything had turned out for him. Indeed, barring his dyspepsia, Providence could hardly have dealt more kindly with him in his middle age had his youth been the correctest instead of somewhat wild and reckless. He had sown the wind and was reaping a zephyr. Not that Mr. Thriftspender, whom Mr. Thriftspender knew, was the Mr. Thriftspender that was known to the world about him. Far from it. There were two Mr. Thriftspenders, so to speak—a Mr. Jekyll Thriftspender and a Dr. Hyde Thriftspender—two personages as distinct as the Corsican brothers, but represented by one actor, who played the double part. The Mr. Thriftspender known to the world was an independent member of parliament, the devoted husband of a plain wife, whom he had married without prospects; a man whom Providence had chastened with a dyspepsia rather for the faults of his forbears than his own. The Mr. Thriftspender known to himself and to one other was a politician who had never joined a party, because he never knew his own mind; the husband of a wife whom the strong-willed Lady Thriftspender had forced him to marry, controlling as she did, the entire fortune amassed by the late Sir Threadneedle Thriftspender, a man who had only himself to thank for the measure of ill health which the world put down to heredity.

The girl he had married was the Lady Mary Fortune, who had been intrusted to the care of Lady Thriftspender, while the marquis of Brixton, her father, was completing the term of his governorship of Bomcutta. For the space of a year Mr. and Lady Mary Thriftspender, whose marriage was far from being acceptable to her parents, had lived on the old lady's bounty.

It is proverbially an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and the gale which blew the good ship Dresdonian, with the marquis and marchioness of Brixton and their only son, the infant Lord Stockwell, to the bottom of the sea and incidentally cast a matter of £200,000 in the 3-per-cents into the lap of Lady Mary Thriftspender, could hardly prove anything but agreeable to that lady's amiable husband. He began to think that really he must have been so cute as to hoodwink Providence; but, whatever was the cause of his good fortune, he was, at all events, inclined this morning on which we are introduced to him to be thoroughly content with the course which his affairs had taken.

True, the heyday of youth and an unimpaired digestion were passed, but he found a dignified and luxurious ease by no means a bad exchange for them, and it was wonderful how many of his waking hours could be enjoyed in the contemplation of the wickedness of his early manhood, the recollection of his Sturm und Drang. Imagination enabled him to take delight in the past without running any of the risks by which they had been accompanied. Never again would he hazard reputation or liberty in the pursuit of unrespectable enjoyments.

At this moment his reverie was interrupted by the entrance of his valet.

Now, Mr. Silby was an absolutely perfect servant. He looked upon his employment as an art. It was not enough for him that every gentleman required certain things done for him, and there a servant's duty ended. He recognized that every gentleman had his idiosyncrasies, his weaknesses, his pet vices, and that to become indispensable these peculiarities must be studied in all their bearings. His late master, the marquis of Brixton, had declared that his greatest grief in leaving England had been the necessity of parting with Silby. Indeed, had it not been for the marchioness it is more than doubtful whether, on learning that Silby absolutely refused to leave his native land, his lordship would not have thrown up his appointment on the eve of his departure. The man had lately become butler to Lady Thriftspender and bodyservant to her son.

"Tell her ladyship, Silby, that I shall not be dining at home this evening."

"Yes, sir; if you please, sir, the same man has called as called yesterday when you were out. He says will you please to see him, as he has something very important to communicate?"

"What did you say his name was?"

"Thomas Bowling, sir."

"What sort of a looking person is he?"

"He's respectably dressed, sir, but seems to me rather foreign in his manner."

"Well, if he looks clean, you can show him up here, only you had better stay within call."

In a few minutes a heavy footstep was heard on the stair, and Mr. Bowling stood within the sacred precincts of Mr. Thriftspender's luxurious dressing-room.

"Well, Mr. Bowling, what is this matter of the first importance that you have to communicate?"

"Mr. Thriftspender, it's a long story I've got to tell you; and, if it's agreeable to you, I'll take the liberty of taking a chair."

The moment the man began to speak it was very evident that he was colonial, and the ease of his manner in the presence of unaccustomed luxury and daintiness made it even more apparent that he was not a member of the English poorer classes. He wheeled an easy-chair boldly up from the corner of the room, and placing it close to the fireplace, without "By your leave" or "With your leave," stretched out his legs and placed his feet upon the fender, as much as to say: "So far as the conversation is concerned we must stand or sit upon an equality."

Mr. Thriftspender was so taken aback by the man's splendid audacity that he was unable to make any remonstrance to his presumption, and even found himself in a cowardly sort of way smiling an acquiescence.

He began to feel that this was a man who was likely to dominate him, and he regretted now, when it was too late, that he had not insisted upon knowing what was his business before having him admitted.

"Now, Mr. Thriftspender, sir," the stranger began, "I've got a strange, strange story to tell you, and one which, if I am not greatly mistaken, will prove a vast deal more strange than pleasant to you and your wife. I've come to this country on purpose to tell it to somebody, and, from all that I can gather, you are the person most interested, and, therefore, entitled to hear it first. You, too, will be able to advise me [this he said with deeper suggestiveness in his tone] whether it is a story worth repeating to others or no."

Mr. Thriftspender moved uneasily in his chair. Could it be that at last one of his wild oats was about to bring forth fruit? Could it really be that, although

"The mills of God grind slowly"

they are certain in the end to get hold of and grind all with exactness? However, at any rate, he must present a bold front, albeit he was pretty certain in his heart that this brutal visitor of his had discerned at first glance that he had but a cowardly fellow to deal with.

"Well, Mr. Bowling, proceed with your story. At present I am at a loss to understand how anything with any mystery in it can be any concern of mine. Let me remind you, too, before it is too late, that any communication you may think fit to make to me is not of my seeking, and I refuse to bind myself in any way not to divulge any facts that you may reveal to me if I hereafter think fit to do so."

Mr. Thriftspender looked at his visitor as much as to add: "You see, you've got a devil of a fellow to deal with," but was disappointed to notice that Mr. Bowling did not seem to be particularly impressed.

On the contrary he merely cleared his throat, spat into the fire and proceeded with his story as if there had been no interruption.

"Four years ago I was a third-class passenger on board the steamship Dresdonian bound for the port of London. I need not tell you, sir, the story of that ship's loss. You, I'll be bound, know all the details as well as anyone alive, that is to say bar a very interesting little bit of news which is only known to myself. The newspapers had it that every soul aboard that vessel was lost, but I'm able to tell you in my own person that those newspapers made a mistake. I, sir, Thomas Bowling, was saved by what some would call luck, but what I call Providence, so as the right people should come rightly by their own. I, Mr. Thriftspender, had by the sweat of my brow made a considerable fortune in the far east, and was on my way back to my native land to enjoy the fruits of a hard life; but that competency, sir, went down in the good ship Dresdonian. What, then, I ask you, did Providence out of that ship's crew save my miserable life for? I'll tell you—although I never guessed why it was until three months ago. Although I've a rough outside, Mr. Thriftspender, I've a soft heart, and it was because my heart was soft that I was saved from that wreck. Yes, sir, on that last terrible night, when, with her engines disabled and her sails in ribbons, the Dresdonian lay as helpless as a log in that tremendous sea, a man was the equal of a gentleman, a woman the equal of a lady, and third-class passengers stood side by side and wept and trembled with the first-classers from the saloon. Every lurch the ship gave was expected to be our last, and we were all huddled close to one another as if determined to go into eternity not alone but in couples. By my side a fine lady clasped her little boy to her bosom. She seemed to have forgotten all terror for herself in the soothing of him. I said a hearty word or two to her, poor thing, which made her turn and look at me. I had got hold of a large cork belt, which I had slipped on, as well as a small lifebuoy, which I thought I might as well have as anyone else.

"'Are you a good swimmer?' she said the moment she looked at me.

"'Yes,' I said, 'but good swimming won't do much in a sea like this.'

"'Will you do what you can to save this child? A mother's blessing will be your reward. My husband is in his cabin unable to move. I must go to him. Possibly I may never see my child again. Take him, and may heaven preserve you and him!'

"In a moment I had taken the child in my arms and the poor mother had vanished down the companion-ladder.

"To make a long story short, Mr. Thriftspender, I and this little boy were picked up by a passing Portuguese vessel bound for Sydney, and in due time were landed there. We were the only two saved from the wreck of the Dresdonian."

Mr. Bowling here paused in his narrative and looked at his companion as though expecting some remark from him, but all that he vouchsafed him was: "Well, I'm waiting to see what on earth your story has to do with me."

"What? Then you've not made a guess?"

"No," lied the other, "not a ghost of a guess."

"Well, then, perhaps these trinkets, which were found tied round the child's neck, will quicken your wits a bit," and Mr. Bowling took from his pocket a small leather case and handed it to his companion.

Mr. Thriftspender took the case, and, with fingers whose trembling he was unable to control, brought to light a gold and coral baby's rattle, a signet ring, and a small gold-mounted miniature on ivory. On the rattle the initials "G. T. F." were engraved, the ring bore the Brixton coat-of-arms, cut on a bloodstone, and the miniature was a portrait of Lady Mary's mother.

"Still I fail to see what these have to with me," at length he said, for it was more natural to him to lie than to speak the truth.

"Then, Mr. Thriftspender, sir, I've made a mistake," said Bowling, rising from his seat, "and I ask your pardon for troubling you with them. I've a letter also which purports to be in the handwriting of the little boy's mother, signed 'Mary Brixton,' and authenticating the child. This, with these trinkets, I shall place to-morrow morning in the hands of Messrs. Ludwig & Ludwig, who, I understand, are the family lawyers. In case you may wish to communicate with me, sir, that address," handing him a piece of paper, "will find me," and pocketing the trinkets Mr. Bowling withdrew.

Left alone, Mr. Thriftspender lay back in his chair unnerved, trembling in every limb, face to face with the most terrible of old bogies of a man with the nervous dyspepsia—a pressing alternative.

On the one hand, poverty, with its attendant train of discomforts and unbearable anxieties and cheese-parings; on the other, riches, retained by fraud, and subject constantly to the illimitable drain of a possibly insatiable blackmailer, with the disquietude of a constant dread of being found out. In either case his dyspepsia was bound to be aggravated. Poverty would entail a third-rate cook, while the retention of his first-rate chef would entail an ever-present grinding anxiety which draws the blood away from the stomach where it is most needed. What was to be done? Clearly the man must not be allowed to go to Messrs. Ludwig & Ludwig with his diabolical proofs of the existence of a young marquis of Brixton before he had had sufficient time to think over the matter. Why, Bowling might even now be changing his mind and going to see the lawyers this very day. The very thought of this possibility threw the poor dyspeptic into a profuse perspiration, and he tugged at his bell with his mind only half made up as to what should be done.

When the faithful Silby appeared he found his poor master in a very miserable plight indeed. His forehead was bedewed with perspiration, while hands and feet were as cold as ice, and his breath came sharp and fast. Mr. Thriftspender felt that he was on the verge of having a fit. But it was only fancy, and in a few minutes Silby had got him into some nicely aired clothes and he lay back comparatively calm, though somewhat exhausted, in his easy chair.

"That man has upset me a good deal, Silby," at length he panted. "I must really stick to my rule—never to see anybody before I am dressed. It's too much for me. I'm not strong enough to bear any excitement before one o'clock."

"No, sir. I began to feel anxious when I heard the man talking so loud, lest you should have one of your attacks, sir; and the doctor says you must be careful, sir, and not overdo yourself."

"You are right, Silby; I don't know what I should do without you. By the bye, I want a note taken at once to that man. It must be delivered without fail into his own hands as soon as possible."

"Yes, sir; and I think, sir, you should take some of your drops, sir."

The late afternoon again saw Thomas Bowling and Robert Thriftspender closeted together, and this interview had a very practical outcome.

It is unnecessary to follow the course of the negotiations; it is sufficient to say that for the sum of five hundred pounds per annum Mr. Bowling undertook to keep his secret, and to bring up the young marquis of Brixton as his own son.

"It is, of course, no hardship to the boy, who has never known better things, Mr. Bowling; and, indeed, wealth and position are far from being as enviable as they look. I am far—"

"You will, of course, like to see the young marq—I beg your pardon, my boy George—now and again, Mr. Thriftspender?" said Bowling, interrupting.

"I think not, Mr. Bowling," replied the dyspeptic, with unusual decision in his tone; "I think not. The fact is, my health is not at all good, and, indeed, I feel that I could hardly bear the sad memories which the sight of the poor child would conjure up."

"Just as you wish, sir, of course. Only you understand that it would be more satisfactory to me that you should see for yourself that the lad is being well looked after."

"Let me assure you, once for all, Mr. Bowling, that I am perfectly content to leave that to you."

Mr. Thriftspender still lives, if the successive periods of nervous depression and active apprehension which go to make up his existence can be properly termed life.

His faithful Silby watches over him with a devotion and assiduousness which nothing can surpass. He is a tender-hearted fellow, a man, indeed, who would not hesitate to risk his own life to prolong that of his master.

"Just to think," as he often says, with tears in his eyes, to his brother, Thomas Silby, alias Bowling, "just to think that so long as Robert Thriftspender lives those little trinkets that I kep' from poor, dead and gone little Lord Stockwell when he started with his ma and pa for Bomcutta, should be worth a matter of $500 a year to you and me, and all without so much as keeping a young marquis out of his own."—London News.

—He (tenderly)—"Would you marry again if I should die?" She—"Not much."

SLIGHTLY PARADOXICAL.

"Howdy do, old man?".

"How are y', me boy?"—Chicago Mail.

No Flowers.

Enthusiastic recalls for prima donna at opera. Ushers passing down aisle with immense baskets and floral devices.

Prima Donna (in low tone to conductor of orchestra)—I vill not take ze flowers.

Conductor—Vy not?

Prima Donna—Ze florist sharge a great deal too much for vun night's use of the flowers ven he sell zem again ze next day.—Texas Siftings.

Asked for an Extension.

Young Husband—My dear, you remember that note for thirty days that your father gave you for a wedding present?

Young Wife—Yes; dear old father! I sha'n't forget his kindness very soon.

Young Husband—No, I don't believe you will. He dropped in this morning and said he wanted to renew it for sixty days more.—Harper's Bazar.

What He Needed.

Mr. Woodware—That young fellow you have in your office is the most conceited puppy I ever ran across.

Mr. Queensware—Yes, I know; but you must remember he is young yet, and his character is not fully formed. He has never been tried by fire.

Mr. Woodware—Then you'd better fire him.—Good News.

Too Much Toil.

First Tramp—If I had my way I'd have 365 national holidays in the year.

Second Tramp—You would, eh? And then there would be one working day every four years. O, you are a nice one, you are! You would make a galley slave of the poor laboring man, wouldn't you?—Texas Siftings.

At His Expense.

"We had a lot of fun at Charlie Closefist's expense this summer," said a returned seaside resorter to her next friend.

"Did you?" was the confident reply "Well, I'll bet a caramel you didn't have anything else."—Detroit Free Press.

Stage Jewels.

Props (rushing into manager's office)—That confounded Sticky, the supe, has stolen the star's diamonds!

Manager—I left them in your charge and you will have to pay for them. I'll dock you three dollars from this week's salary.—Jeweler's Circular.

LOOKING FORWARD.

Farmer Washington Mundy (to his next-door neighbor)—Say, Jonas, if you don't keep that rain on your own side of the fence I'll sue you for damages. Don't you see my clothes are hung out to dry?—Puck.

A Practical Father.

Wise—Why shouldn't Mr. Goodsoul make a nice husband for our daughter?

Husband—Won't do. He's a miserably paid, wage-earning producer.

"Well, how about Mr. Kindheart?"

"He won't do either. He's a poor, money-spending consumer."

"Hum! The only other one she cares for is Mr. Hardhead."

"He'll do. He's a middleman."—N. Y. Weekly.

Interchangeable Engagement Ring.

Isabella—This ring that Charlie gave me is very pretty, but it is too tight.

Arabella—Well, you see, your fingers are somewhat stouter than Alice Ponsonby's.—Jewelers' Circular.

A Sweet Voice.

Miss Keys—Ever since you have been talking to me I have been struck by something familiar in your voice. It reminds me so much of Mr. Wyckoff's. Do you know him?

Mr. Choirs—No; where does he sing?—Puck.

A Brother's Part.

Sweet Girl—George, although I refused to marry you, I promised to be a sister to you, you know.

George (gloomily)—Y-e-s.

"And you know you said I might, and you said you'd be a brother to me."

"Did I?"

"Yes, I'm sure you said something like that."

"Well, I'll try."

"That's real good of you. Can you spare a little time for me now?"

"A lifetime if you ask it."

"No, only a few hours."

"Certainly. What is it you want?"

"That hooked-nose old lady over there, with green goggles, is my chaperone. I wished you'd take her off and flirt with her this evening, so I can have a little chat with Mr. Hansom."—N. Y. Weekly.

Her Higher Education.

Cousin Hugh—Whereaway so early, and in such a hurry, this breezy morning?

Miss Brainie (fresh from medical studies at Vassar)—Don't detain me. I'm going right over to help my old friend, Mrs. Wellewed.

"Anything wrong?"

"Wrong? I should say! Yesterday she said she was going to wire her husband. And I didn't even know he was dead. He'll make a lovely skeleton, and I can show her just how he should be wired."—Pittsburgh Bulletin.

What He Hoped.

Mr. De Brute—My wife has a dog which knows one hundred different tricks. Wouldn't you like to have him?

Showman—Indeed I would. Is he for sale?

"No."

"Won't she sell him at any price?"

"No."

"Then why do you speak to me about him?"

"I was in hopes may be you would steal him."—Good News.

An Important Event.

Sunday-School Teacher—Now, children, we must bear in mind that between our last week's lesson and this quite a period of time is represented as having elapsed. During this time a very important event has taken place. Yes, Annie (noticing a little girl at the end of the class smiling knowingly), you may tell us what it is.

"We've all got our winter hats."—Texas Siftings.

Probabilities as to Transportation.

Laura—If papa gives his consent, George, dear, when you go to ask him, won't you be fairly transported with joy.

George (somewhat apprehensive)—Yes, Laura, and if it shouldn't happen to strike him favorably and he's feeling right well I shouldn't wonder if I'd be considerably moved anyhow.—Chicago Tribune.

A JOCOSE DOG.

Fido—Hello, Tige! Where have you been this morning?

Tige—Oh, I've just been out for a short tramp.—Golden Days.

A Happy Occasion.

Hyand Lowe—Did you go to Mrs. Chinwag's reception?

Rowne de Bout—Yes. It was a far more enjoyable affair than was expected.

Hyand Lowe—How was that?

Rowne de Bout—Spowter, who was expected to recite, failed to appear.—Puck.

A Little Flattery.

She—I thought I married the best man in town, but I find I made a mistake.

He—I thought I married the best little girl in town, and I find that I was not mistaken.

She—Forgive me, Charlie—you know that I don't always mean what I say.

He (sotto voce)—Neither do I.—Jury.

THOUGHTFUL TO THE LAST.

He—Oh, Mary! I can't hold on any longer.

She—Then wait till I get out of the way. No use losing a husband and a new hat at the same time.—Jury.

A RAPID ZEPHYR.

It Made Phenomenal Time and Was Badly Handicapped.

"I guess we will have a storm to-night," observed Hornaday, coming into the cabin on the mountain side and glancing casually out of the open door at the clouds rapidly rolling up in the northwest.

"Wouldn't be s'prized a durn bit if we did, posner," commenced the host. "We sometimes has right peart storms up hyer."

"Wind, I suppose?" asked Callicott.

"Yas, pooty muchly wind. An' when it do blow it passes the bill right over the president's veto, posner, you bet."

"Blows pretty hard in Arizona," said Hornaday, feeling called upon for a specimen. "I've seen the thinnest sort of sage-brush twigs driven three feet deep in granite bowlders by the sheer force of the wind.

"Yes, they say the breeze is pretty fresh in Arizona," commented Callicott; "but, land o' Goshen! it can't touch the northwest. Why, I've seen every drop of water blown clear out of a river-bed for miles at a time and running along in a solid mass on the opposite bank, forced up there and held there by the simple pressure of the gale."

"Here she comes!" cried the old hunter as the storm broke over the cabin and the wind rushed by like a fiend infernal, shrieking and screaming horribly. "How fast does you gents spose them winds of yourn uster blow on workin' days?"

"Well," yelled Hornaday, to be heard above the howling tornado, "the signal service in Arizona reported it as about one hundred and fifty miles an hour."

"Up there in the northwest," chipped in Callicott at the top of his lungs, "the wind has been estimated at one hundred and ninety miles an hour and upward."

"Humph," contemptuously put in the old mountaineer, "do you gents call that blowin'? You just wait a shake or two and I'll size up this here zephyr that's amusin' itself outside. It commenced blowin' when?"

"Just fifteen minutes ago by my chronometer," replied Hornaday.

The old fellow hurried to the door.

"Come here," he called, opening a small peep-hole as he spoke, through which the storm rushed madly with a whistle like a steam engine. Sniffing at the air once or twice he said: "I thought so. What d'yer smell, gents?"

"Phew! Something rotten—skunk!" gagged Callicott, holding his nose.

"Limburger cheese!" ejaculated Hornaday.

"Right, my bully buck! Right you are! That's limburger cheese you smells. Fifteen minutes ago that wind blew through the front door of Pete Gashwiller's saloon in Bobville, right across the free-lunch counter."

"Well?" interrogated the two hunters.

"Bobville's jest agzackly two hundred and seventy-nine miles from where you're standin' this here identickle minute!"

Then silence reigned supreme inside, while the breeze from Bobville continued its jaunt.—Cincinnati Commercial Gazette.

Passementerie and Lace Basques.

Sleeveless basques of black passementerie are worn over a colored silk waist with silk sleeves, and are trimmed with a fur collar band, and front border of brown mink, sable, or black marten. The passementerie falls in coat-like tabs below the waist, while the silk is merely a round bodice. This is very elegant when violet colored bengaline is used for the waist and sleeves, and faced cloth of the same shade for a bell skirt. Black marten fur trims the waist, and also borders the skirt, where it is set directly on the edge and is headed by passementerie. Short Figaro jackets of heavy white guipure lace are imported to be worn over waists of dark velvet that are laid in lengthwise pleats like those of Norfolk jackets. This is effective on an afternoon house gown with plaited blue velvet waist, and deep girdle with sash ends falling on a skirt of blue wool that is closely studded all over with very small steel beads cut to glitter like stones.—Harper's Bazar.

A Neat Coiffure.

A pretty way of arranging the hair is that of combing the front locks back (after waving them) over a very small roll. Then at each side of the head, above the temples, are soft rings of hair that veil the forehead. The rest of the hair is combed up to the top of the head, divided into four portions which are loosely plaited, then coiled or intertwined, forming the "basket braid cap," as it is called; which covers the crown of the head, coming close to the soft roll of hair above the forehead. When the head is well shaped and the features fairly regular this fashion of dressing the hair is much admired. It has a neat appearance, quite distinct from the ultra fuzzy style so long popular. This smoother, yet very graceful coiffure, when it happens to suit the face, is decidedly pretty. Fine long hair pins are required to fasten the plaits securely.—N. Y. Mail and Express.

Artistic Hangings.

The latest regulations in artistic house-furnishing prohibit the hanging of pictures on the walls of any room except such as may be specially set apart as galleries. Large-patterned papers, or silk with huge floral designs, cover the panels into which the wall artistic is divided. Here a wall bracket with a bit of pottery, there a nest of shelves laden with bric-a-brac, a jar on a high pedestal filled with ferns or tropical flowers, fills a third panel, and a bit of rare eastern cloth, richly wrought with gold, festoons another picture space. Fashion has decreed that the old familiar portraits and oil landscapes in their massive frames are useless lumber and must go. The dainty and delicate water colors that have delighted our eyes are killed against the giddy flowered paper, and the restful etching finds no welcome in the fantastic glitter and sheen of the Louis XIV. apartments.—N. Y. Sun.